

NOTES AND QUERIES.

It might interest some of the little ones to hear of our latest pet. Last winter, during the severest frost, a magpie flew into the house for warmth. We gave him milk and bread, and he lived in the nursery for two days and two nights until he looked stronger, when we opened the window and away he flew. The next day he returned, and since then has never left us, always coming when we call him. He is very impudent, and, I am sorry to say, is a little thief, but then you see he cannot read the *Parents' Review*, and knows no better. He flew off with a silver thimble one day, and we watched him dig a hole in the garden and bury it. When he has too much bread he always hides it in the ground, and fetches it as he requires it. Our cat is very friendly with him, and now the summer is here we generally spend the morning in the garden, together with two dogs, the cat, and the magpie. The children play at being Robinson Crusoe with his animals. Hanse, as they call the magpie, dearly loves a game at hide and seek round a tree. He runs backwards and forwards, and no child can catch him. If ever a bird laughs he does, when they rush wildly round and always miss him. Like some little children he is revengeful. A neighbour's little boy struck him one day with a stick, and Hanse flew at him in such a passion that the child's cries brought everybody to the rescue. Since then he will not play any more with the children in that garden, but runs after them and pecks at their little white legs. But to the children who have never been unkind to him he is everything that is amiable and sweet. He has so far only learnt to say one word. When asked, "Hanse, have you had your dinner?" he puts his head on one side in a thoughtful manner, and says "No." I am afraid he often says this after a very substantial meal. So you see Hanse has many lessons to learn yet. He was caught one day and put into a cage, but he then refused to eat, and became so thin in two days that his captor opened the door and set him free, and Hanse has since been allowed perfect liberty. Our children say they would like to know if any other little ones belonging to the *Parents' Review* have any pets, and what they can do.

MATER.

BY THE WAY—

Might I bring before your readers one special point I have lately thought much about, in the hope that some one will take the subject up, and write an article for the *Parents' Review*? Is the power of reading character and the finer sense of judging the moral character of others an instinct, or can we teach it to our children, girls especially? Many girls do possess it naturally, and these always choose the right friends, and eventually marry men of high moral character. Others, gifted it may be in many ways, have no unconscious sense of this, and at first we see them making friends of girls below their level, and afterwards marry men whom the finer instincts could not even tolerate as acquaintances.

Lately an example of the latter class has been painfully brought home to me, and a life has been wrecked in consequence of this, the only weak point in her armour. One dreads making a child dissect and criticise others, but cannot we, by only putting before children that which is pure and holy, make it as impossible for them to stoop lower as for an artist to care to live with almanacks on his wall in place of pictures? PERPLEXED.

[Books and other "small type" matter must this month give place to the invaluable notes of matters concerning children discussed at the Congress of Hygiene.—ED.]

P.N.E.U. NOTES.

SYDNEY, N.S.W.—A public meeting was held on June 11 to take into consideration the necessity for forming Parents' Unions. The Most Reverend the Primate presided, and there were present many of the clergy and other influential persons. The Primate observed, in the course of his remarks, that "family rearing underlies all moral and social developments." The Rev. Dr. Corlette moved the first resolution:—"That this meeting, believing the family to be the basis of society, is of opinion that many of the evils which threaten society at the present day may be traced back to the neglect by parents of their parental duties." Mr. A. B. Weigall moved the following resolution:—"That this meeting desires to affirm the urgent necessity for awakening parents to a sense of their parental obligations, and for assisting them by every possible means in the discharge of such obligations." The Rev. H. L. Jackson moved:—"That this meeting desires to recommend the formation of Parents' Unions similar in principle to those which exist in England and elsewhere." Mr. Jackson, who has strenuously advocated, for five years or more, the establishment of "The Parents' Union system" in Australia, said in the course of his valuable address:—"The Parents' Union is, in a word, the practical recognition of the parents' needs." Many parents need to be aroused from indifference to a sense of their responsibilities. In the words of Professor Seeley, "too many parents have, in a manner, abdicated." A central organisation may do a great deal by distributing leaflets, arranging lectures, &c. A great deal more will be done by example. "My impression is that the Parents' Unions, wherever formed, will exercise an important influence outside the circles of their

respective members." Parents who are already awake to their duties feel strongly the need of more knowledge. "Speaking generally, all of us parents who are really anxious about our children are forced to feel that we want more knowledge than we possess for the adequate discharge of our duties as parents. How may this knowledge be gained? In two ways. We parents must be ready to *learn* from those who have made education in one or other of its many aspects their special study. And again, we parents must help one another and be ready to receive help one from the other. A great deal of knowledge is to be gained as parent meets parent in friendly and serious discussion. Now the Parents' Union system, as I understand it, exists for the purpose of enabling its parent-members to gain the needed knowledge, and in the two ways I have spoken of." Parents' Unions should tend directly to the prevention of disease, sickness, sin, and irreligion. "There are 'Mothers' Unions' and 'Parents' Unions' as a recognised part of the Diocesan machinery in nearly a dozen of the Dioceses of my own State Church of England." "The exceedingly great importance of the movement from a social point of view has been recognised, and the 'Parents' National Educational Union,' which, insisting merely on 'a religious basis,' is open to all, is gaining ground rapidly." "What we want to see is a number of Parents' Unions growing up in all directions—alike in general principles, differing in details of methods and rules. It will be the work of the Provisional Committee (which you will be asked to appoint) to promote their formation in every possible way." "We may hope that the Provisional Committee will be replaced by the Council of a great central Society with its branches everywhere." "It will, I think, find a 'constitution' ready to hand in that which two years ago was formulated by the Parents' National Educational Union of England." Mr. Jackson concluded his address by reading the "Rules and Principles" of the P.N.E.U. The Provisional Committee was duly formed, consisting of Professor MacCullum, A. B. Weigall, Esq., the Revs. Principal Kinross, J. W. Debenham, Dr. Kelynack, W. Mathison, J. Fordyce, T. G. Owens Mell, C. J. Prescott J. D. Langley, H. L. Jackson, and F. W. I. Harrison, Esq.

PRIZES.

Mrs. Gordon writes, "Will you put in an Extra Half-Guinea, adjudged as a *Special Prize* for the most excellent paper by Mrs. Pumphrey, which came too late for the competition?" (*Management of a Nursery*.)

Owing to holiday irregularities, Mrs. Alfred Booth's Award will not be announced until our next number. For the same reason the following competitions are still open:—

1. Mrs. William S. Hall's Prize of *One Guinea* for a pretty little air to the words of "Mary, Mary, quite contrary."
2. Mrs. Duff's Prize of *One Guinea* for the best list of books for boys and girls of from twelve to fifteen. (See August Number.)

Competitions may be sent in (addressed to Editor, care of Publishers) until the 15th inst. So far, only two competitions have been received in each case.

THE PARENTS' REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF HOME-TRAINING AND CULTURE.

"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

CHILDREN'S PRAYERS.

BY THE BISHOP OF WAKEFIELD.

There can be nothing more important in the training of children than to teach them the habit of prayer. But before they can learn the habit they must understand the meaning of prayer. I suppose most children, who have had any teaching at all in religious matters, would tell you that prayer is *speaking to God*, but I think a very large proportion of such children probably have a very imperfect conception of what this really means. They no doubt "say their prayers," but that is not necessarily praying. The very first thing they must have most clearly and definitely pressed upon them and fixed in their minds is the truth that they are not really praying unless they feel that they are speaking to God and that God is listening to them. It is a vast gain, a long step in the religious life, when they have once realised this; when, in other words, prayer has become a real thing to them, and not a mere empty form. I am speaking now of quite little children, and I am sure this lesson can be taught very early. One has constant evidence of the way in which quite little children do realise what prayer is in the petitions, often raising an inward smile no doubt, which many a mother hears her little one utter as it says its baby prayers at her knee. Perhaps I ought to have gone even further